



## Preparing for your play street

We offer lots of free downloadable resources to help your play street sessions run as smoothly as possible – go to [www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets/handy-tools](http://www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets/handy-tools)

This includes stewarding guidance, a risk/benefit assessment, flyers and a letter template to help publicise your session. Here is a checklist for the key things to do in the run up (2-4 weeks) and of course on the big day itself. Enlist help with tasks wherever you can – it's much more fun that way!

### Order signs and cones from Hackney Council

Contact Hackney Council to arrange delivery of your 'Road Closed' signs and traffic cones. Most streets need two 'Road Closed' signs and for many roads it's good to have 'Road Ahead Closed' signs too, which you place ahead of the closure area to the side of the street, tied to a wheelie bin. Hackney Council's Streetscene team can sort these out for you and advise:  
Email: [charlotte.connell@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:charlotte.connell@hackney.gov.uk) The Council will also send you some public order notices around a week before, which go up on lampposts.

### Tell us

Let us know when your first session is happening. We'll try to make it along to your first one to support you. We also provide you with a start-up pack including stewarding equipment (high vis and whistles). Email: [playstreets@hackneyplay.org](mailto:playstreets@hackneyplay.org)

### Tell your neighbours!

You will want to let all your neighbours know that the play street is happening – ideally a week or two beforehand. You can post out flyers or letters through letterboxes, and display posters in windows or on lampposts. Use our editable templates for posters and flyers to make it a bit easier, or feel free to create your own! We'd love to see it if you do. Some streets laminate flyers to reuse each time. Find posters here: [www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets/handy-tools](http://www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets/handy-tools)

## Safety

### Do a risk/benefit assessment and street walkabout

Whilst it is impossible to eliminate all risk, as the organiser of a play street it is important to think through all potential risks and how you will manage them well ahead of your first session – and you can use our risk/benefit template to help.

Many experts on childhood now recognise that risk-taking in play is beneficial for children in terms of their physical development, self-esteem and happiness. Accidents such as children falling off scooters or tripping over will happen in play streets, as they do in parks, playgrounds and streets on any normal day.

The most serious risk to manage is from cars/drivers entering at speed, but this is minimised by having stewards who follow the procedures around road closures and stewarding – see information on stewarding below. We also recommend doing a walkabout of your street to identify any particular risks – e.g. are there any entry points to flats with car-parks? If so you might want to think about how you will manage this, perhaps having an extra steward stationed here to stop cars driving out at speed. If there is a steep hill you may decide you want to reduce the risk of children riding down very fast, maybe having an agreed area for bikes and trikes which you could mark out with chalk. In addition do a final walkabout of the street just before the session starts - looking out for any extra risks - e.g. broken glass in the street – and remove any obvious hazards.

Each time you do a play street – review your risk assessment and update to reflect any new risks or extra steps you’ve found to help manage the closure. We can support on this area too. If you wish to read up further about risk/benefit assessment see [Tim Gill’s website](#): <http://rethinkingchildhood.com>

### **Recruit stewards**

You will need to recruit neighbours to help with stewarding on the day. Stewards should take the role seriously and we advise that they are not looking after young children (e.g. those under 5) as this can be tricky to manage. There has to be two people at each end of the street to divert cars and escort residents’ vehicles through at 5mph, once children have been cleared from the road. We recommend having one extra floating steward to roam between the two closure points looking and listening out for people who may be about to leave in cars.

### **Read our ‘Guidance on stewarding a play street’**

You can download the stewarding guidance here [www.hackneyplay.org/handy-tools](http://www.hackneyplay.org/handy-tools)  
As the organiser, it is very important that you know this protocol and are confident in briefing others on what to do. It’s a good idea to circulate the stewarding guidance to all the volunteer stewards in the week before the play street session.

### **Hold a stewards briefing**

Each time you run a play street, arrange to meet and brief your stewards 20 minutes before it starts. At the briefing you will give out high vis and whistles, plus the stewarding guidance note, and talk through how the stewarding should be done. Also make them aware of any further risks they need to be aware of – and steps to manage them – using your risk assessment. Give the stewards a chance to ask questions and make sure everyone is clear on their role, plus when and how the session will end.

If people doing later shifts can’t make the briefing, instruct the first shift stewards to fully brief those taking over. After the briefing, you can also get the stewards to help with the street walkabout to look out and remove any hazards. With notice we aim to come to all first sessions – and if you wish we will support you with the first steward briefing.

## **A note on liability and insurance**

As organiser of any event you take on some potential liability for injuries or damage to property. Hackney Council advises organisers to take out public liability insurance, but does not insist on it. This is in keeping with many other local authorities’ policies. To our knowledge, only a couple of the 40 plus Hackney streets taking part have taken out insurance, which costs from £50 to £120.

The national organisation Playing Out advises:

*“We are not lawyers but we have sought advice from lawyers and it seems that the liability situation is slightly uncertain. It is best to get advice on this from your council and also look at the FAQs on our website for more explanation. In general, the best way to prevent being held liable for anything that goes wrong is to make sure you do everything in a responsible way. Our main advice is that you take good care, prepare well and encourage everyone to be sensible and respectful about other people and their property. In all publicity and on the day, please remind parents that playing out sessions are not ‘risk-free’ and that they are still ultimately responsible for their own children’s safety, both during and after the sessions.” [Playing Out manual – Feb 2015](#).*

Link to Playing Out’s FAQs including detailed information on liability and managing risks at <http://playingout.net/how/faqs/#thirtysix>

## On the day

There’s no need to organise games or anything special to entertain the children. Kids will do it for themselves and will enjoy coming up with their own fun. Some basic items that always work well are chalk, skipping ropes, hula hoops and soft balls, but it’s always best to let the children take the lead and encourage them to bring out what they want to play with.

Putting the kettle on and offering out tea always goes down well with the adults and you could think about having a few volunteer tea makers. People sometimes make cakes and these are sure to go down a treat! You could put up some bunting across the road or around your road closed signs to make it look more fun.

## Get tips from others and share yours too!

Do sign up to the [Hackney Playing Out Facebook group](#) and the national [Playing Out group](#) for more inspiration and ideas. The groups are a great source of peer support.

*The Hackney Play Streets Project – part of Hackney Play Association and funded by Hackney Council - issued this guidance. The information is adapted from the Playing Out manual. Playing Out is the community interest company, which pioneered the ‘playing out’ model of road closures and supports anyone who wants children to play out more.*

### Further information:

[www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets](http://www.hackneyplay.org/play-streets) - more info and free downloads

[www.playingout.net](http://www.playingout.net) - FAQs highly recommended and lots of other free tools

[www.hackney.gov.uk/play-streets](http://www.hackney.gov.uk/play-streets) - with a map showing all Hackney’s play streets!

### A project by:



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